### ROOT CAUSES

**Historical**
- During the 19th century the Somali speaking population of the greater region was divided arbitrarily by the French, Italian, and British into five distinct units: Djibouti, British & Italian Somaliland, The Ogaden (Ethiopia), and The Northern Frontier District (Kenya).
- Somali Republic (1960 – 1991) constituted the former British and Italian Somaliland; a confusing myriad of politically and ecologically different interests.
- 1969 coup – adoption of “scientific socialism”, administration dominated by Southerners.
- Strategic geopolitical interest during the Cold War period, which attracted military and economic aid, artificially sustained the state.

**Political**
- Clan system of political patronage to safeguard his weak state; alienation of Issa and Hawiye clans.
- Failure by Barre to move beyond divide and rule politics created a legacy of clan divisions and grievances.

**Societal/Socio-Demographic**
- Social & economic differences between the nomadic Somalis and the more settled peoples of the area between the Shabelle and Juba rivers aggravated by population movements during conflict.
- Social fragmentation: culturally homogenous, but dominance of genealogy and the lineage system.
- Among nomadic peoples competition over control of natural resources (along kinship lines).
- High levels of distrust of the state and political power and idea of state as a source of wealth.

**Economic**
- High level of dependence on foreign aid and indebtedness from the 1970s & 1980s.
- Poor economy - lack of infrastructure and resources; additional decline in the 1980s (after termination of Western foreign aid and decline in prices for livestock); high reliance on Arabian markets.

**Regional/International**
- Irredentist ambitions of Barre regime leads to disastrous war in Ogaden (1977-78) leaving Barre vulnerable to various Somali liberation movements.
- Nomadic movements across international boundaries.
- Overgrazing/destruction of vegetation/land degradation/erosion/desertification.
- Persistent drought.

### PROXIMATE CAUSES

**Political/Governance**
- President Siad Barre ousted in 1991, followed by prolonged period of anarchy and warfare due to power struggle between rival clan warlords.
- No functional, central governing authority since 1991; lack of financial or military means to exist; little political consciousness for modern state.
- Widespread abuse of human rights by warlords and oppression of minority clans.
- Highly fragmented political environment – manipulation of intra and inter-clan identities for economic and political ends.

**Security**
- High level of small arms proliferation; widespread gun ownership in Mogadishu.
- Islamic courts set up Mogadishu’s only judicial system (mostly Sharia and customary law) providing growing sense of law and order.
- US accusations of “terrorist” links.
- An economy of plunder - regular outbreaks of violence for control over territory and strategic resources (e.g. commercial arteries); piracy - fish catches and aid shipments.
- Sustainability of economy questionable: resource based, no strategic value.
- Most assets in the hands of businessmen - private sector both in and outside of Somalia is the economic mainstay of the country.
- Foreign aid and protection money as source of income for warlords/businessmen.
- Extreme dependence on remittances from large expatriate community; disturbed by US restrictions following 9/11.
- Imposition of livestock ban in 2000 has devastated the economy, worsened pastoral livelihoods & increased local disputes.

**Societal/Socio-Demographic**
- Dominance of genealogy-based clan system is a ‘double edge sword’: shifting clan, sub-clan & sub-sub-clan lines allegiances, temporary alliances, coalitions of lines.
- Disintegration of family system, changing gender roles and social values.
- Widespread displacement as a result of civil war has altered clan boundaries; this in turn has impacting on state and societal relations.
- Since 1991 conflict and hunger have killed hundreds of thousands; 1,7m famine starvation – insecurity has hampered aid efforts.
- Widespread Gät (Khat) abuse among men – reduces productivity; enriches warlords.
- Some 450,000 Somalis live in refugee camps outside the country.

**Regional/International**
- Uncoordinated foreign intervention by regional neighbors and international community in crises since the 1990’s.
- Accusations that current Somali government is an Ethiopian client.
- Western war on terrorism; external funding fostered creation of ARPC by Mogadishu warlords.

**Ecological**
- Intra and Inter-clan clashes over land, water and grazing rights in central.
- Increasing demand & limited supply of natural resources; unregulated; environmental degradation and desertification; exploitation motivated by international actors.
- Rich fishing waters unregulated and little monitoring.

### POSITIVE INTERVENING FACTORS

**DECREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ARMED CONFLICT**
- Dissolving of ICC 27 by Ethiopian – TFG forces (Dec 2007); internationally recognised TFG remains the only legal authority.
- Beginning of reconciliation process by domestic and external actors.
- Engagement of external actors, particularly CG, in supporting the TFG’s stabilization and reconciliation efforts.
- Growing coordination among opposition groups in order to merge their fragmented political agenda for reconciliation with the TFG.
- Increasing political pressure from external actors and business sector, demanding all-inclusive reconciliation and the development of law and order.
- Enhancing internal military capacity of TFG forces and diplomatic efforts to withdraw Ethiopian forces from Somalia.
- Traditional systems of governance providing a degree of stability and increasing clan solidarity as alternative means to violence.
- Increasing humanitarian activities by donors and humanitarian organizations.
- Constant return of IDPs.
- Opportunity of national reconciliation to reduce clan differences and the growing competition over resources.

### NEGATIVE INTERVENING FACTORS

**INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ARMED CONFLICT**
- Failure of TFG to restore stability and secure legitimacy of Somali society.
- Opposition coalition retains its divergent interests.
- Widespread fears of regional destabilization in the relatively stable sub-states of Puntland and Somaliland.
- Increasing tendency in clan-based solidarity opposing the functional administration in the TFG controlled areas such as Kismayo.
- Political and military deficits of the TFG providing an opportunity for ICC to reorganize and come again into power.
- Reluctance of the TFG to initiate external actors desired NRC halting the progress of external actors’ support to Somalia stabilization.
- Continuing insurgent attacks and counter insurgency measures impacting on humanitarian shipments and supplies.
- Insecurity coupled with recurrent drought and price inflation deteriorating the humanitarian situation.
- Boycott of the key political opposition and Hawiye family clan from the NRC; thus, risk of internal clan division and scaled-up opposition alliance in favour of more sophisticated armed resistance.
- Eventual withdrawal of Ethiopia would considerably reduce the TFG’s military capacity to secure Mogadishu.

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**FAST Analytical Framework Somalia: August 2007**

**LIKELIHOOD OF ARMED CONFLICT**

**IMPACT ON**

**NEGATIVE INTERVENING FACTORS**

**INCREASING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ARMED CONFLICT**

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[Diagram: FAST Analytical Framework Somalia: August 2007]
Abbreviations

ICC – Islamic Court Councils
TFG – Somalia Transitional Federal Government
CG – Contact Group, which was inspired by USA for Somalia stabilization mission
AMISOM - African Union Stabilization Mission for Somalia
SNM - Somali National Movement
NRC – National Reconciliation Conference

References


IRINnews, (2005) Some key actors in the transitional process, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.


Web Links

allAfrica.com: http://allafrica.com/somalia/
Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org
Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org
International Crisis Group (ICG): www.crisisgroup.org

Note: this list of references is not exhaustive